

political head” expresses his understanding that, under the circumstances, the “Prince” had no choice but to secure his own power as a tyrant by all the violent means that are usually considered to be crimes. The acts are justified by the vision of the sovereignty and independence of the people, the *Volk*, which depend on the destruction of the lesser local authorities. But when the tyrant’s work is done, he automatically appears as a despot, and “then, it is the tyrant-slayers who are heroes.”

Machiavellian Rule

The assessments of Machiavelli himself are still mixed. The more favorable ones may be exemplified by that of the twentieth-century philosopher Ernst Cassirer, who wrote that Machiavelli’s accomplishment lay in not allowing his personal feelings and ideals to affect his political judgment, which was “that of a scientist and a technician of political life.” But whatever the verdict on Machiavelli the person, the Machiavellism of which he wrote pales in the face of the massive attack on conventional morality by the twentieth century’s great tyrants, Stalin, Hitler, and Mao.

Machiavellian behavior has been integral to the political and social life of every culture. One of the reasons why it is found everywhere is the universal need for a social system with an effective leader. When it is not clear what authority, if any, is to be obeyed, the result is uncertainty, social friction, wasted effort, dissatisfaction, and the willingness to follow any leader who promises to overcome the threat of chaos. In any case, morality proves to be easy to equate with conformity to the demands of leaders, however careless they may be of compassion and of truth. The individual conscience proves to be at its most elastic when leaders and followers assume that the cause they serve is of such surpassing importance that deception or cruelty in its behalf is in fact a moral virtue. Such a hope for a better society ordinarily requires that those who appear to be obstructing it should be identified and proclaimed to be its enemies.

See also *Political Science; Power; State, The; War.*

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Bodde, Dirk. *China’s First Unifier: A Study of the Ch’in Dynasty as Seen in the Life of Li Ssu*. Leiden: Brill, 1938.
- Chagnon, Napoleon A. *Yanomamö*. 5th ed. Fort Worth, Tex.: Harcourt Brace, 1997.
- Ghoshal, U. N. *A History of Indian Political Ideas*. London: Oxford University Press, 1959.
- Gilbert, Felix. *Machiavelli and Guicciardini*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1965.
- Guicciardini, Francesco. *Selected Writings*. Edited by Cecil Grayson and translated by Margaret Grayson. London: Oxford University Press, 1965.
- Haas, Jonathon, ed. *The Anthropology of War*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.
- Kautilya. *The Kautilya Arthashastra*. Translated by R. P. Kangle. 2nd ed. 3 vols. Bombay: University of Bombay, 1969.
- Lewis, Mark Edward. *Sanctioned Violence in Early China*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990.
- Machiavelli, Niccolò. *The Chief Works, and Others*. Translated by Allan Gilbert. 3 vols. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1965.

———. *The Prince*. Translated by Robert M. Adams. Rev. ed. New York: Norton, 1992.

Meinecke, Friedrich. *Machiavellism*. Translated by Douglass Scott. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1957.

Scharfstein, Ben-Ami. *Amoral Politics: The Persistent Truth of Machiavellism*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995.

Spinoza, Benedict de. *The Political Works*. Translated by A. G. Wernham. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1958.

Walter, E. V. *Terror and Resistance*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1969.

Ben-Ami Scharfstein

MACHISMO. Machos are not born; they are made. For the same reason, the term *machismo* refers to a concept that has been invented and not to a primordial cultural trait of any particular group of people. In the United States, machismo was “discovered” by social scientists and feminists much as the New World was “discovered” by Europeans five centuries earlier: U.S. scholars and feminists noticed gender oppression in Mexico and the rest of Latin America and announced that it was a particular cultural trait among Spanish-speaking men.

Although some believe machismo has ancient roots common in all “Latin” cultures since Roman times, others argue that it is an ideology that originated uniquely in Andalusia, Spain, and was carried over the Atlantic Ocean during the Spanish Conquest. There is even an opposite theory positing that machismo was indigenous to the pre-Columbian Western Hemisphere. In fact, the term *machismo* has a very short word history dating back only a few decades in the twentieth century.

This does not mean that what scholars today call sexism is new to the Americas, or that inequality based on sexuality and gender difference—today recognized under rubrics like homophobia and misogyny—are of recent vintage. But like the expression sexism, the term machismo is new.

Perhaps the most complicated aspect of the idea of machismo stems from the fact that until fairly recently the term may have been more broadly used in the United States than in many parts of the Spanish-speaking world. Although elsewhere in the world *macho* always has had a negative connotation when referring to humans—it originates in a term that designates the male of an animal species (*hembra* being the female)—in Latin America the term has a somewhat different history. Only in the 1990s did the term come into vogue more broadly in Latin America; earlier it was mainly utilized to refer to culturally determined forms of masculinity by intellectuals and activists involved in examining and struggling against oppressive regimes grounded in ideas and relations of gender/sexuality systems in journalistic writing, social science studies, and feminist critique of the oppression of women and gays.

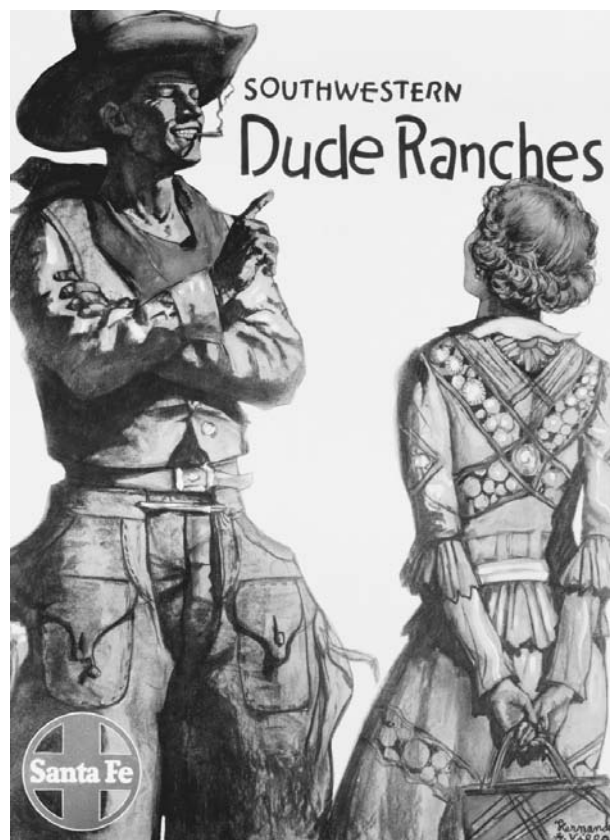
Pegging extreme sexism to one or another culture is a dead-end at best, and a racist subterfuge at worst. In the contemporary United States the machismo mystique is regularly employed to imply that somehow Spanish-speaking men, and especially Spanish-speaking heterosexual men, are more prone

than men from other cultural backgrounds to sexist language, actions, and relationships. This is in large part a result of scholarship by U.S. academics, including anthropologists and sociologists, who have gone to Mexico and other parts of Latin America to study questions of family, kinship, and gender/sexuality and through this research have developed interpretations and paradigms consistent with hegemonic notions of studying down—that is, looking at populations that have been marginalized and oppressed (as opposed to “studying up”; that is, examining the ruling classes)—and finding political, social, and cultural fault with oppressed others.

In Latin America, the term *macho* usually must be distinguished from that of *machismo*. Macho has different meanings in different social circumstances: sometimes it refers simply to the male of a species, whether animal or plant. In other cultural contexts “to be macho” can have contradictory connotations: for older generations this may refer to something positive for men to emulate, so that a macho man is one who is responsible for the financial welfare of his family, whereas for younger men to be macho can refer to culturally stigmatized behavior like beating one’s wife, and thus in order to differentiate themselves from this kind of stigmatized practice many men of these younger generations would not readily refer to themselves as macho.

The term *marianismo* was created, in almost biblical style, in machismo’s image: it was not good for the macho to be alone, so in 1973 a North American academic invented *marianismo*. *Marianismo* has done damage to our understanding of gender relations and inequalities among Latin American and U.S. Latina women similar to the damage done by machismo among Latin American and U.S. Latino men. Now discredited, *marianismo* was originally an attempt to examine women’s gender identities and relationships within the context of inequality, by developing a model based on a religious icon (María), the quintessential expression of submissiveness and spiritual authority. This notion of Latin American women is grounded in a culturalist essentialism that does far more than spread misinformed ideas: it ultimately promotes gender inequality. Both *marianismo* and machismo have created clichéd archetypes, fictitious and cartoonish representations of women and men of Latin American origin. If a Mexican man, for instance, is abusive and aggressive, he will be labeled a macho. If a Mexican woman quietly endures such an abusive relationship, her behavior is automatically examined within the *marianismo* paradigm. But if a white man and a white woman display similar behavior, they are seldom analyzed in so cavalier and simplistic a fashion.

What is more, frequently these traits of machismo and *marianismo* are pegged in particular to working class men and women, as if those from the middle and upper strata were too sophisticated for their lives to be captured by such crude academic groupings. As theoretical categories, therefore, machismo and *marianismo* are not only culturally chauvinist but elitist as well. The machismo-*marianismo* paradigm represented an expression of a widespread intellectual colonial mentality in the behavioral and social sciences that remained dominant and unchallenged for far too long.



Poster by Hernando G. Villa advertising dude ranches, 1938. Although the term *machismo* is generally specific to Latin America, the concept has also spread to the United States where the connotation suggests physical toughness, masculinity, and old-fashioned family values. © SWIM INK/CORBIS

As a contemporary idea, machismo has long since entered popular discourse, including among the Latino/a populations in Latin America, the United States, and elsewhere. Indeed in the twenty-first century, Latino/a cultures are commonly defined from within as inherently macho. As such machismo has become a critical aspect of Latino/a identity politics, even when, as in this case, the cultural characteristic in question is held to be a negative set of ideas and practices.

The etymology of the idea of machismo thus has roots in political and social concerns of the late twentieth century. The origin of the term is found in texts, especially journalistic, social science, and feminist dissections of Mexican men and Latinos in general in this period. The popularization of machismo as an epithet for Spanish-speaking males of the species coincided with the rise of second-wave feminism and, later, cultural identity politics in which supposedly immutable cultural traits were linked, as if genetically, to men with one or another geographic and/or class ancestry.

The origins of the term give an indication of its future as an idea: to the extent that hegemonic ideologies and ways of constructing knowledge about Latin America and Latinos

remain unchallenged, including with regard to gender relations and inequalities, it will be possible to continue employing machismo in a stereotypical fashion and as an expedient label for complex social interactions. If, on the other hand, the idea of machismo and that of its even more problematic would-be opposite, *marianismo*, are recognized and discarded as antiquated paradigms invented to explain and teach about gender inequality in Latin American and Latino/a societies, then the idea of machismo could be short-lived. Machismo as a shorthand for sexism may have come into journalistic, social science, feminist, and popular vogue for a variety of reasons, including the well-intentioned desire to criticize gender inequality and oppression. The continued employment of this hackneyed term can only reflect the persistence of an elitist and racist model to understand gender inequities among women and men of Latin American origin.

See also *Feminism; Gender; Gender Studies: Anthropology*.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- de Barbieri, Teresita. "Sobre géneros, prácticas y valores: Notas acerca de posibles erosiones del machismo en México." In *Normas y prácticas: Morales y cívicas en la vida cotidiana*, edited by Juan Manuel Ramírez Sáiz, 83–106. Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1990.
- Fuller, Norma. "Reflexiones sobre el machismo en América Latina." In *Masculinidades y equidad de género en América Latina*, edited by Teresa Valdés and José Olavarría, 258–266. Santiago, Chile: FLACSO/UNFPA, 1998.
- González-López, Gloria. *Erotic Journeys: Mexican Immigrants and Their Sex Lives*. Berkeley: University of California Press. Forthcoming.
- Gutmann, Matthew C. *The Meanings of Macho: Being a Man in Mexico City*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996.
- Paredes, Américo. "The United States, Mexico, and Machismo." In his *Folklore and Culture on the Texas-Mexican Border*, edited by Richard Bauman, 215–234. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1993.
- Zinn, Maxine Baca. "Chicano Men and Masculinity." In *Men's Lives*, edited by Michael A. Messner and Michael S. Kimmel, 24–32. 5th ed. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 2001.

Gloria González-López
Matthew C. Gutmann

MAGIC. Magic is the performance of acts or rites that are intended to influence a person, object, or event. It can also be performed to counter other magic. Magical acts or rites are usually performed with the assistance of mystical power. People who engage in the different activities magic encompasses can be called magicians, shamans, healers, sorcerers, or priests/priestesses. In some societies the knowledge required and the ability to perform magic are restricted to specialists who have undergone extensive training, while in other societies they are available to the common person and are learned as part of the enculturation process. In early-twenty-first-century anthropological discourse magic is generally considered to be a dimension of religious thought and practice and to be an aspect of culturally influenced understandings about causality, while in

popular culture magic is often associated with superstition and used to refer to ideas and practices considered to be false and inferior. Divination is frequently identified with magic. It concerns the attempt to learn or discover information that is not accessible to most human beings through acts of skilled interpretation and the use of mystical power. The information discovered can be used to inform an act of magic but divination is not itself the act of influencing people, objects, or events.

Since the early twentieth century, scholars writing on magic have been interested in a variety of issues that concern its instrumental effects, social functions, psychological functions, symbolic attributes, and the forms of thought that characterize it. Their inquiries and theories have offered a range of ways to approach the study of magic, have made important contributions to the development of the disciplines of philosophy and anthropology, and continue to raise central questions about the limitations of language and culturally influenced perception in the interpretation of less familiar ideas and practices. The study of magic presents contemporary scholarship with a rich history on which to build theories of intersubjective understanding. An analysis of the intellectual and epistemological history of Western thought about magic reveals patterns of ethnocentrism. Awareness of these constructions offers the possibility of advancing methods of cross-cultural and cross-society comparison in addition to the creation of theories that more fully address the range of ideas and practices that can be considered in magic.

Vocabularies used to describe the practitioners, outcomes, and qualities of magic seem to gain popularity for certain periods of time, evolve in ways that reflect the concerns of particular disciplines, and come to be associated with specific geographic areas of the world. Witchcraft and sorcery, for example, have been used predominantly in the social sciences to refer to harmful or destructive uses of magic. Another example is the relatively limited use of the term shamanism in anthropological literature to practitioners of magic in Northern Europe and the Americas. In addition, shamanism assumes that magical acts can have both harmful and helpful consequences. Anthropological literature that concerns practitioners of magic in Africa has often relied on the term *healing* to refer to helpful magic, and *witchcraft* to refer to harmful magic. In an attempt to develop a more universal vocabulary and to avoid some of the topical and regional associations carried by the terms *witchcraft* and *sorcery*, some scholars prefer only to use the term *magic*.

Magic, Religion, and Science

Of particular interest to intellectual history is the way that the terms magic and religion have been used in a social evolutionary framework to mark differences between the Western and non-Western, the advanced and backward, civilized and primitive cultures, and to characterize Christian and non-Christian religions. Many scholarly ideas are based on a set of assumptions about the differences between magic and religion, placing greater importance on the achievements of religion and greater value on its truth claims. These ideas bear some similarity to distinctions offered in the Old Testament and in early Christian theology. Some scholarly ideas address the difference